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1 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Bob Packard, Policy Planning Staff,
Department of State

1. During our conversation, Mr. Packard supplied the following information on the production of planning and policy papers.

2. According to Mr. Packard, there are at present three distinct producing streams. The first involves so-called policy guideline papers, which are basically country papers designed to replace both existing NSC and OCB papers. The State Department was assigned the task of producing these papers early in the present administration, and it alone has responsibility for the final product. The aim is to re-do all existing papers over the next few months--which Packard thinks is optimistic. The Department will co-ordinate these papers, but will not clear them (see below).

3. Mr. Packard had no firm idea about how co-ordination would take place. He surmised that the sequence of production would be as follows: Papers are initially written by desk officers, and at this stage the desk officers may check with their opposite numbers in other agencies. In the case of some countries, the draft produced by the desk officers will be discussed with the Policy Planning Staff, and another draft produced. The next step will be to refer the draft to the field for comment. Either simultaneously or subsequently a draft will go to other agencies for formal comment. (This stage has not yet been reached on any policy guideline paper.) The draft will be sent from a high level in the State Department--Deputy Under Secretary Johnson's office--and will be directed to high levels in the other agencies. State hopes that the other agencies will deal with the major issues in the paper and not go in for nit-picking. The Department will then rewrite the paper, taking the views of other agencies into account as it sees fit; this is what Mr. Packard meant by co-ordinating but not clearing. The paper will then be cleared through State and promulgated. It will receive the same distribution as the old NSC country papers.

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4. Mr. Packard remarked that an agency with views different from those of State will have three ways to get its views considered. The first is during the process of co-ordinating already described. An agency can also take its views to a luncheon meeting of the Planning Group and, if it feels strongly enough, get its views considered by the President or at an NSC meeting.

5. The second stream consists of planning papers or statements of policy undertaken at the request of the White House. Back in February the Planning Group drew up a list of 19 subjects which it felt should be considered by the President or at least by Mr. McGeorge Bundy. The President saw this list, approved it, and about a half dozen papers were assigned out.

6. Within the past three weeks, the luncheon group has been considering a revised list of planning problems. State drew up a suggested list dated May 16, and it was discussed at a Planning Group luncheon on the same day. On the basis of this discussion, the list was revised. The luncheon group will agree on a new list, set priorities, and assign work to the appropriate departments. (Note by undersigned: The latest list, dated May 30, is in two parts. The first is entitled "Suggested Master List of Planning Problems" and the second "Suggested Urgent Planning Problems". The latter includes the most urgent problems appearing on the master list. These lists were discussed at the Planning Group luncheon on 31 May and were slightly revised. The revised lists will apparently become the official lists.)

7. The relationship between the producing agency and other agencies has not yet been established. Presumably a single agency will do the paper and will get contributions and/or will co-ordinate with other agencies. It is expected that the completed and co-ordinated papers will be considered by the luncheon group. Some may then go to the President and others may go to the NSC.

8. The third stream consists of papers on crash problems which have been handled by ad hoc assignments. Such papers have been requested by the White House or by Bundy and have

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usually been assigned to task forces. This production has been neither programmed nor systematic but strictly ad hoc. It is expected that production in this manner will taper off.

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1cc - W. Mark Mattheis

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